

SIGNPOST

Newsletter of the
Peak and Northern Footpaths Society



Number 47

Autumn 2014

Chairman's Piece.

This will be my last contribution to Signpost as chairman of Peak & Northern Footpaths Society. Although my role has been largely one of a caretaker until a new chairman could be found, I still feel honoured to have undertaken the job and would like to thank those of you who have sent me messages of support.

As you will see from the letter inviting you to the EGM in November we now have candidates for the posts of Chairman, Secretary and President who, if elected, will I'm sure secure the future of PNFS for many years to come.

In my few months as chairman I've become very aware of the hard work and dedication of the many volunteers who run Taylor House, install signposts and bridges and inspect our footpaths. I've also become aware that we desperately need more help and would encourage each of you to get involved if you are able to do so. Any help you can offer is welcomed, from delivering our leaflets to people you might meet when out walking, to editing this newsletter or becoming a regular on Monday mornings at Taylor House. PNFS is dependent on your support and without it we would cease to exist.

If you live some distance from Taylor House modern technology is available to assist. In our monthly management meetings we regularly have people attending by video link and I can assure you it works very well indeed!

It is with sadness that I report that Fred Travis died earlier this year. Fred was a passionate member and footpath inspector of the society. Fred, a retired joiner also assisted with the erection of numerous signposts.

Alistair Taylor

Half Year Meeting

Saturday 15 November 2014 is the date for this year's HYM.

Kindly notify Paul Easthope by phone or text 07759 653354 or Email mail@pnfs.org.uk stating if lunch is required no later than 7th November.

To help defray meal costs, individual donations are invited for a minimum £8.50 per person

What should Inspectors' report?

My answer is all faults, including obstructions, overgrown paths, faulty stiles, missing or damaged signs and unofficial diversions. Do not neglect to report matters because you believe, albeit reasonably, that nothing will be done by the Highway Authority to remedy matters.

Councils allocate resources on the basis of demand for their services. Sending in a steady stream of fault reports helps to keep staff in employment and gives them ammunition to argue for more funding. Where experienced PROW staff have been made redundant and replaced by staff from highways who usually deal with road problems, their inability to cope with a flood of complaints about footpaths has led to reinstatement of some of the original rights of way workers.

This happened in Bolton.

Most Councils are now setting up or encouraging volunteers to work on PROW's particularly the clearing of vegetation and way marking of paths. In Bolton for example the Ramblers work closely with the PROW officer to clear paths outside the list of paths cleared by Council's contractors. For these schemes to be effective it is essential that the Council has a full picture of what matters need attending to.

Highway Authorities do sometimes have resources to spend quickly e.g. towards the end of a financial year or where there is an under spend on a contract. It is easy to allocate this money on erecting or replacing footpath signs or mending stiles. However this presupposes the Council knows where work needs doing. They will certainly not be able to send out an officer to look for work that needs doing.

There is also an important legal reason why all paths which are difficult or impossible to use should be reported. A footpath may be extinguished under section 118 of the Highways Act 1980 by the Highway Authority making an order on the ground that the path is not needed for public use. The Society must be consulted about any proposal to make such an order and if we oppose it, as we would often do, the matter will be resolved by a planning inspector at a hearing or public inquiry. A key issue in such a case is whether there have been any complaints about the state of the path. Where there is no evidence of use of the path and no record of requests for action to reopen the path it is a difficult task to persuade the inspector that the path is needed by the public.

Of course some faults are more important than others. Most Councils have priority criteria which they apply to complaints. Inspectors should be aware of these criteria and reflect them in their fault reports. Where the matter is a high priority, e.g. because the fault is dangerous, on a promoted route or a path of strategic importance to the network or a route to school or avoids walking on a heavily trafficked road, this needs drawing to the Council's attention but not at the expense of neglecting to report the more common or garden varieties of fault.

Terry Norris



A Job Well Done.

In March of this year members of the Society were enjoying a walk around Saddleworth when they encountered the stile pictured below when ascending Higher Stanedge. This stile proved very difficult to get over. One member of the party was even forced to crawl underneath to get past the 'stile'. A complaint was duly made to the highway authority requesting that the stile be put into good order by the landowner. The officer responsible for public rights of way approached the landowner but to no avail.

As the stile was so difficult to negotiate it amounted to an obstruction. Thus as Courts and Inquiries Officer I obtained authority from the Society to serve a section 130A notice on the Council. This has the effect of forcing the Council to comply with its legal duty under s130 of the Highways Act 1980 to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are responsible (wonderful words!)

It then transpired that the stile was not on the definitive line of the footpath, it having been unofficially diverted by the landowner. This prevents the use of the s130A notice procedure. However under another provision of the Highways Act, section 146 the Council can themselves serve notice on the landowner to put a stile into proper repair. If this notice is not complied with they can then recover three quarters of the cost of repairing it themselves. This applies even if the stile is on a non definitive path, providing it is on a public right of way. Here the diversion had been dedicated to the public by the landowner providing the stile and moving the signpost.

The dedication has been accepted by the public using the path over a long period. Thus the path has public status. The Council again approached the landowner to make the stile fit for purpose. The landowner pleaded lack of funds. The Council then told me that matters would have to wait until they had sufficient funds to employ a contractor to repair a number of stiles at the same time.

The stile is now in a good state of repair. Why? Martin Riley the local inspector, who was on the walk in March and Terence Cavanagh, a long standing member of the Society and a former public rights of way officer went out and repaired the stile themselves. The result is as shown in the photo. A job well done, but no thanks to the Council.

Terry Norris

Advice for Walkers

Sue and Chris Woods (Peak District Green Lane Alliance), guest speakers at the AGM in April, have this to say about what you should do if you see illegal use of a route or moorlands by recreational motor vehicle users

It is illegal for recreational motor vehicles to use a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway and to drive on open moorland or on fields without the owner's permission.

It is legal (unless there is a TRO in place) for recreational motor vehicles to drive on a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT).

It will be uncertain whether it is legal or not for recreational motor vehicles to drive on a route shown as an Other Route with Public Access (ORPA). However, the Police will take no action unless dangerous driving or driving without number plates is involved.

It is always legal for landowners, farmers and emergency services to drive on any route.

It is also illegal to drive on a route where there is a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) forbidding recreational motor vehicle use. We are aware of some known permanent TRO's in the Peak District National Park (unfortunately there is no central list of these).

These are:

- The Roych (a PDNPA TRO forbidding all recreational motor vehicle users)
- Beresford Dale, Derbyshire (a Derbyshire County Council (DCC) TRO forbidding all recreational motor vehicle users)
- Edale Road (from the car park at Bowden Bridge near Hayfield to Upper Booth) (a DCC TRO forbidding all recreational motor vehicle users)
- Oven Lane, Macclesfield Forest area, East Cheshire (a Cheshire County Council TRO forbidding all recreational motor vehicle users)

Temporary TROs come and go for repairs to routes. Some of these will prevent certain classes of users from using the route. These are often flouted and are not always signed well or publicised.

Advice for Walkers (cont.)

If you see illegal off-roading in progress, please report it to the Police as soon as possible using the non-emergency 101 number.

The Police will be interested in:

- Types of vehicles involved and how many
- Registration numbers (if you can get them).
- Any distinguishing features eg colours of vehicle, clothing etc

Insist that the Police give you an incident number so that it gets recorded on their system. If you can safely get photographs, please do so but take care as there have been cases of people having memory cards removed from phones by recreational motor vehicle users. Do inform the Rights of Way Officers of the relevant local authority and PDNPA by email (Mike.Rhodes@peakdistrict.gov.uk) so that they are aware of the problem.

If the incident involves a footpath, bridleway or restricted byway, if you have the time, check to see whether signs forbidding recreational motor vehicle use are in place (they are often removed in some areas). If signs are missing or appear never to have been present, let the Rights of Way Officers know. Good signage could help to reduce the problem.

Also report any instances of dangerous driving or driving without number plates whatever the status of the route.

Do not expect any immediate response from the Police. Hopefully, they should give you some feedback but that is not always forthcoming.

Sue and Chris Woods



Bridge Volunteer needed

Our Footbridge Volunteer for the last seven years, Neil Collie, would welcome some assistance with his task. "Most of the work can be carried out remotely from Taylor House" says Neil "and mainly involves e-mail contact with the local authority's Public Rights of Way Officers. I get suggestions for bridges from our Inspectors and, in particular, from our Courts & Inquiries Officers. These need to be checked out on the ground to see if they meet the Society's criteria. Discussions with the Rights of Way staff can be protracted but, generally, the authorities welcome the chance to work co-operatively with the Society." Each project has to be justified and the funds have to be approved by the Society's Trustees. The local authority has legal responsibility for each footbridge, so it has to organise the design and construction of the bridge.

Neil says "The Trustees have been very supportive and I find the work very rewarding as there is something tangible to show at the end. Since I took over this role, the Society has been able to fund nearly £25,000 of works from legacies. I have visited some wonderful locations in our region which I had never been to before!"

If you would like to help please contact mail@pnfs.org.uk or give Neil a call on 0161 440 9424 for further information.

Thoughts of a Signpost volunteer.

These words were written by one of our volunteers whilst sitting up near signpost 50

*Step-out - feel the joy of walking at your own speed
 Relax - let no-one rush you
 Greet the dawn of the new day
 Let the moorland stream wash your feet
 See the wild roses in the hedgerows
 Watch the bees in the heather
 Miss nothing
 Let the steep incline test the strength in you legs
 Let your eyes delight in the joy of distant views
 Lie in the deep, dry moorland grass
 Tune your ear to the wind in the heather
 To the ascending lark, and the lonely call of the curlew
 See everything in 3D for free
 Watch the sun set and the moon rise
 And find the Pole Star - the star which has guided
 so many to their true destination.*

Bill McGuinness

Website update

Many visitors to the society's web site (www.pnfs.org.uk) don't use a conventional computer, they use a mobile device. Currently about one in four visitors uses a mobile phone or a tablet, and the proportion is increasing all the time. The small screen is obviously a challenge, but by pinching, zooming and sliding, it's possible to find your way around any web page, even one designed for a full-sized screen, using a mobile phone. After a while this can get quite tedious, especially when you're used to apps that have been designed specially for the mobile phone screen.

For a mobile phone, a web page needs to have large enough text that it can be read without zooming, and a narrow enough page that it can be viewed without needing to scroll sideways. The whole page can then be seen by scrolling up and down using your thumb. This is quite different from the way a page usually looks on a full-sized monitor.

Website update (cont.)

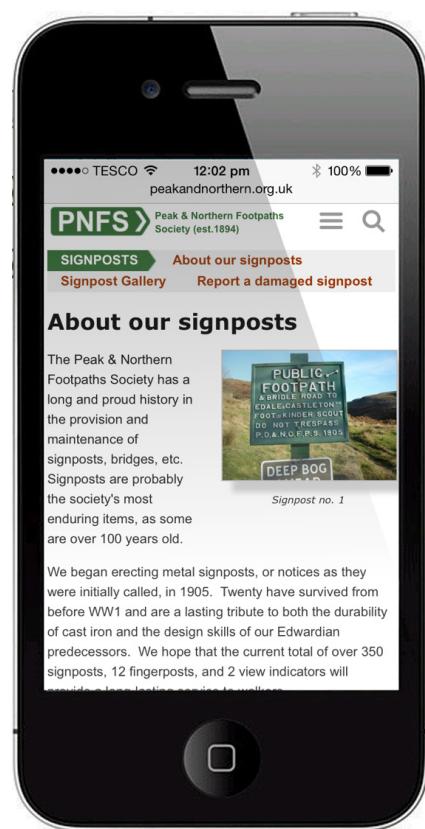
The society's web site has recently been improved by using a design technique called responsive web design, which means that the pages automatically reshape themselves according to the type of device being used. Specifically they respond to the width available for displaying the page.

You can see the effect by viewing a page on a phone or tablet and comparing it with the way the same page looks on a computer. Or if you don't have a phone handy you can "pretend" using just a computer, by dragging the side border of the browser window inwards, seeing the page layout change as the window gets narrower.

When pages are mobile-phone width, you'll see that parts of the page have rearranged themselves from side-by-side to above-and-below. Pictures have shrunk. The text is in a narrow column like a newspaper. The main menu and the search box have shrunk to icons in the top right corner that expand when you click on them. Those changes are applied gradually as the page gets narrower, so that the page layout is the best possible for whatever size of display is being used.

Hopefully these latest improvements to the society's web site will be helpful in informing younger members of the public (who are more likely to use a mobile device) about the society, and attracting more members and volunteers.

Mike Barnes
webmaster@pnfs.org.uk



Short Walks Programme.

Wednesday November 12th

Leader: John Humpherson. Tel 0161 449 0524, mobile 07754 899 717

Marple Circular

6 miles undulating

Train from Manchester Piccadilly 10:14, arriving Marple 10:38 (not Marple Rose Hill)

Walk starts Marple station 10:40

Wednesday December 10th

Leader: Ian Mackenzie. Tel 01663 742920

New Mills circular

6 miles. Two short but steep inclines.

May be muddy.

Train from Manchester Piccadilly 10:45.

Walk starts at New Mills Central Station 11:15

Wednesday January 14th

Leader: Martin Riley

Newhey to Shaw & Crompton.

About 8 miles, some climbs.

Walk starts at Newhey Metro tram stop at 11:00

Tel 01706 848408

Long Walks Programme.

Wednesday October 29th

Leader: Ken Brockway. Tel 01949 843572
Linear walk Alfreton to Ambergate.

11 miles 1200ft ascent

Start Alfreton station 11.05. 09.43 train from Man Picc

Off Peak return currently £14.70 with Senior Railcard

Ambergate back to Alfreton by local bus.

Return train 18.08 or 19.08 depending on wining/dining preferences.

Wednesday November 26th

Leader: Bill Minshall. Tel 0777 198 5846

Linear walk Kidsgrove to Stoke on Trent inc

The 3 Peaks of the Potteries

10 miles undulating

Start Kidsgrove station 10.30.

09.46 train from Man Picc

Walk concludes at the Glebe pub with its famous pork pies.

Wednesday December 10th (NOTE

not last Wed in month)

Leader: Martin Riley. Tel 01706 848408

Circular walk Greenfield inc further visit to Saddleworth 55 battleground. 10 miles hilly. Walk starts Greenfield station 10.25.

09.57 train from Man Vic or 09.41 from Man Picc change Stalybridge.

Wednesday January 28th

Leader: David Brown. Tel 01663 733236

Linear walk Buxton to Whaley Bridge

10 miles 1500 ft ascent.

Walk starts Buxton station 10.50.

09.49 train from Man Picc.



Dear Member,

NOTICE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

I am delighted to tell you that candidates for the separate offices of Chairman and of Secretary; and for appointment as President (to take the place of Clarke Rogerson) have come forward. The Managing Committee recommends the members concerned for appointment and has decided to convene an Extraordinary General Meeting for the purpose. I also report that the Managing Committee has appointed two new Trustees: Jack Burling and David Hurrell and has designated the latter Vice Chairman to act until the next AGM. Short biographies of the candidates not already known to the membership are set out below.

The EGM will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday 15th November 2014 at the Britannia Stockport Hotel, Dialstone Lane, Offerton, Stockport, SK2 6AG (immediately before the Half Year Meeting). Formal notice is enclosed.

As foreshadowed when I was appointed Chairman, I will resign from that office and as a trustee at the EGM. Clarke has decided to resign as President because of his need to adjust his priorities to accommodate family circumstances. Those resignations will take effect immediately following the appointment by the meeting of the recommended candidates or, if the meeting does not appoint them, at the end of the meeting.

The Trustees are extremely grateful to Clarke, both for all he did whilst he was Chairman and for his initiatives since John Broadbent resigned. As you will see from the enclosed agenda, they recommend members to make him a Vice President.

Each of the recommended candidates has agreed to serve conditionally upon the meeting appointing all of them in accordance with the item on the agenda. The proposals are, therefore, a package, will be moved as such and the meeting may choose between appointing all candidates and appointing none.

Prospective Chairman: Gavin Miller
Age 66; Born Renfrewshire, Scotland
Resident in Knutsford, Cheshire for 22 years; previously Harrogate, N Yorks 9 yrs

Qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1973. After two years working in Africa he held a number of Financial Controller and Finance Director roles in the private sector in Scotland and England. Latterly he spent a year with the North-West division of a national charity and then 5 years managing the passenger transport budget for Lancashire before retiring in 2010.

A keen rambler, he joined Ramblers Association in 2010 and leads walks for his local Group and is Treasurer of North and Mid Cheshire Area. A member of PNFS since 2011, he is a footpath inspector for several Cheshire parishes and has also led walks for PNFS.

Gavin is keen to work with the trustees and officers to further the Society's aims which in his view are today as relevant and important as ever.

Newly appointed Trustee and Vice Chairman; David Hurrell

Born and lived in Deepcar, Sheffield all my life, with one son, who is a Footpath Inspector in the Derbyshire Dales. I have spent my entire career in the steel industry, working as a Project Engineer.

I have been an active walker in the Peak District since being a teenager, and continue to regularly walk in this beautiful area.

I have been a member of PNFS for a number of years, and became a Footpath Inspector around three years ago, when I saw the need to work for the maintaining of the footpath network for all to walk.

I am a regular participant of the Longer Walks programme.

I very much support the aims of the Society and what it stands for, and I am keen to be part of the team to progress those aims.

Newly appointed Trustee; Jack Burling

I moved to Sheffield in 1966 and became a PNFS inspector. In addition I worked for and was on the committees of the following organisations:

RA SYNED area F.P. secretary	1972 to 1992	Sheffield Group F.P. Secretary	1995 to 1999
RA National E.C.	1984 to 1985	RA SYNED area Vice Chairman	2000 to 2001
C.P.R.E. Branch E.C.	1984 to 2002	O.S.S. E.C.	2002 to 2004
RA SYNED area Chairman	1993 to 1998	L.A.F. Vice Chair	2003 to 2004
S.C.A.M. Chairman	1994 to 2004		

I moved to Cornwall in 2004 and was Newquay RA F.P. Secretary

Yours sincerely

Alistair Taylor
Chairman

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mail@pnfs.org.uk.



One of our inspectors writes:

“Having walked locally through fields with Llamas, Alpacas and even Ostriches I was really taken back with this fellow when I turned a corner on a footpath up towards “Black Panther” country on Chinley Churn.

And before any one asks I had not been in the pub.

The Rhino stands about four and a half feet high and is made of solid wood, very well carved and very realistic. Should anyone wish to feed the fellow then go to SK 02314 83588”.

Tony Brackenbury

Signpost is edited and published by the Peak & Northern Footpaths Society
Contributions and comment can be sent to mail@pnfs.org.uk.